



An Update On The Situation In Ukraine

March 10, 2022

Together with our partners at **The Schechter Institutes**, we at **Masorti Olami** continue to be in close contact and monitor the situation of our Masorti/Conservative communities across Ukraine and outside of the country. We are sharing with you, our friends and supporters around the world, an update about the current situation on the ground, as of today. We want to thank all of our supporters from around the world. Thanks to your donations we have been able to evacuate over 60 refugees from Ukraine to safe places, and been able to provide them with everything they may need such as food, transport and shelter. Your help has meant that members of our communities are now safely in **Germany, Poland, Romania, Hungary, Israel** and **Czechia** and are being taken care of by our communities and/or connections there. Without your ongoing support and offers of assistance, none of this would at all be possible.



Community members in Chernivtsi after their last Havdallah together before evacuating Ukraine

The Situation In Ukraine

The situation in Odessa has been relatively calm, and together with **The Schechter Institutes**, we have started to think about food distribution and activities, but need a few more calm days to implement these plans. **Zev Waxman**, leader of our Odessa community, together with the help of **Rabbi Irina Gritsevskaia**, Executive Director of **Midreshet Schechter**, has distributed food to older people in the community, and even though it may not be enough, it's what he was able to purchase right now. He has been going house to house to check on everyone who is taking refuge there. It has also been relatively quiet in Kyiv and on Tuesday, several buses left for Chisinau in Moldova and Romania with many members of our communities. **Yuri Radchenko**, community leader in Kharkiv managed to flee to Dnipro, a city further away from the fighting and challenges in Kharkiv, but is now stuck there and cannot get to Chernivtsi. The teacher at our school in Kharkiv has also managed to distribute food including fish to community members who have been especially challenged to get even basic supplies in the city. Our 'refugee camp' in Chernivtsi is still existing, with many refugees continuing to pass through on their way to safer places. Currently more than 60 people are staying with our Chernivtsi community either in a hotel, in apartments or with the community itself. It has been difficult for the Chernivtsi community to provide as much food as is needed to feed all of the refugees in their care. **Lev Kleiman**, our community leader in Chernivtsi, again together with **Rabbi Irina**

Gritsevskaya, have been working tirelessly to care for everyone and we thank them both immensely.



Lev Kleiman, our community leader in Chernivtsi delivers food to members

What Has Been Done This Week

Many of our community members who were in Chernivtsi crossed the Romanian border on Sunday, thanks to the tremendous help and support from the **JDC**, and travelled to Oradea in western Romania where they were graciously met by the Jewish community. Despite long queues at the Romanian border, all of our members travelling as part of the Chernivtsi group, made it through safely. “This was a huge win, for all of us”, said **Tehila Reuben**, Deputy Director of **Masorti** and **MERCAZ Olami**, who has been running the operation of getting our refugees across the borders and safely to our European communities. The group was finally able to rest, breathe, and get a taste of the beautiful city of Oradea, ending their visit with a dinner hosted by the local Jewish community.



The group from Chernivtsi after crossing the border into Romania

The group then continued to Budapest, where they were welcomed by our **Dor Hadas** community and **Marom Center**, led by **Adam Schonberger**, who fed them, took care of them and welcomed them to his community. They prepared home cooked meals for the group of refugees and have been assisting them with the visa and Aliyah process for those who will travel to Israel. They also purchased 45 rapid COVID tests since the group needed negative tests in order to check-in to their hotel in Berlin (which thankfully all came back negative!). They also arranged for long-term parking for **Rabbi Reuven Stamov's** two cars which he drove from Ukraine, to stay there until he comes back from bringing his family to Israel. **Tehila Reuben** shared that "there are yet again no words to describe the efforts of **Adam** and his community who have welcomed our people. Working with **Adam** and his team so closely over the past three days has been truly heartwarming and encouraging".



Our community and Marom Center in Budapest, led by Adam Schonberger, host our Ukrainian refugees

You can get a taste from the pictures included, just how emotional it was. It was even more emotional for some, since this was the point where those continuing to Israel and those continuing to Berlin parted ways. Those who wish to continue on to Israel will remain in Budapest and many are already on their way to Ben Gurion Airport or have already landed, including **Rabbi Reuven and Lena Stamov**, the leaders of our communities in Ukraine, and their family, as well as two other members from our communities in Ukraine.

Rabbi Mauricio Balter, Executive Director of **Masorti and MERCAZ Olami** together with **Tehila Reuben**, and **NOAM Olami** Director **Chani Goldengreen**, along with **Rabbis David Golinkin** and **Irina Gritsevska** from **The Schechter Institutes**, greeted the **Stamov** Family at the airport. **Tehila Reuben** commented that “it was a rather emotional reunion, not knowing whether to feel happy and relieved, or sad and worried”. **Rabbi Reuven Stamov** will settle his family in Israel before returning to Chernivtsi and Berlin to take care of his communities. We are working closely with our partners at **Masorti Israel** to ensure there is a support network for Ukrainian refugees arriving in Israel.



The Stamov family arrive in Israel where they were greeted by representatives from Masorti Olami and The Schechter Institutes

The rest of the group, consisting of 36 refugees, travelled on to our community in Berlin led by **Rabbi Gesa Ederberg**, who along with **Eva Frenzen**, CEO of **Masorti Germany**, and the rest of their community are taking great care of them. They are placing refugees with member families, providing the children with places at **Berlin's Masorti school**, with pupils starting as soon as today! The Berlin community has also ensured that the unvaccinated members of the group will receive vaccines in Berlin on Friday. The community has been preparing for the arrival of their guests over the past few days, ensuring that nothing is spared. **Tehila Reuben** was “speechless over how much effort is going into making our group feel welcome in Berlin, to feel at home and to be comfortable in Berlin. Some of these refugees had left their homes with only the clothes on their backs, and are now in a place where they are 100% taken care of. I feel truly lucky to have a job that exposes me to such holy people in this world. So thank you, **Rabbi Gesa** and **Eva**, and your entire team of volunteers”.



Ukrainian refugees are welcomed by our Berlin community, led by Rabbi Gesa Ederberg and Masorti Germany CEO, Eva Frenzen



Ukrainian refugee children from our communities begin their first day of "gan" (kindergarten) at the Masorti Elementary school in Berlin

Our communities in **Poland** and **Prague** are still working very hard with the refugees that are with them, on helping them get to their next destination. We again want to thank all of our communities around Europe who have offered to assist and welcome refugees and are supporting our ongoing efforts. Along with **The Schechter Institutes**, we continue to support our communities still within Ukraine by evacuating them to safety, as well as with individual families and refugees who have fled the country and are in need of our assistance.

What Are Our Communities' Most Urgent Needs?

We have compiled the most pressing needs that have been shared with us by our representatives of the communities from Ukraine, towards which your donations are and will be going. While it is still extremely difficult to transfer funds to those on the ground, together with our partners at The Schechter Institutes, we have found several reliable ways to get our communities the necessary

funds across the borders and into Ukraine to where it is needed most.

Basic goods and supplies are needed by our communities across the country and in their new homes. This includes food, accommodation and sanitary products as well as protective gear and equipment such as helmets. Our communities also require vitamins, medicines and medical supplies, which are in short supply in the country.

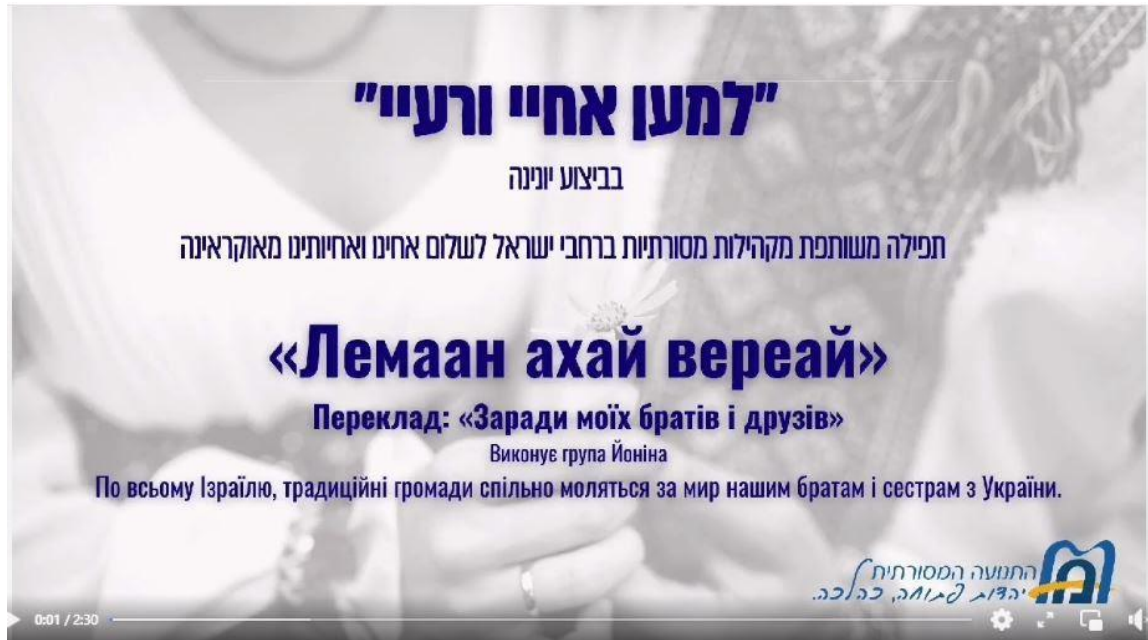
Transport and evacuation to safe communities and houses, both in western Ukraine and in neighboring European countries, as well as Israel, is still needed for those who are seeking refuge. Our communities need to be evacuated to safety, via ground or air travel, and need accommodation once they reach their destinations. Our European communities who are now taking in refugees will need additional support to hosts people, tend to their urgent needs, and help get them settled in their new reality.

Long-term support and rebuilding of our Ukrainian communities will be needed. While we deal with the most pressing needs on the ground, together with our partners, we are starting to build a plan for the 'day after', when our community members will need to rebuild their lives wherever they find themselves. We will continue to update these needs, as the situation develops.



Our community and Marom Center in Budapest, led by Adam Schonberger, host our Ukrainian refugees

Masorti Communities In Israel Come Together To Send Prayers To Our Communities In Ukraine



Masorti/Conservative communities from around Israel have come together to create a beautiful joint prayer and message for our Ukrainian brothers and sisters, and all those impacted by the situation in Ukraine, which can be viewed [here](#). The outpouring of support from Masorti/Conservative communities has been immense. We are proud of **Masorti Israel** for creating this video to stand with our Ukrainian communities.

Prayer For Peace In Ukraine

On February 24, we were joined by over 1000 people online for our '[Prayer For Peace In Ukraine](#)', organized together with our partners at **The Schechter Institutes, Masorti Israel, Rabbinical Assembly, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism** and **MERCAZ Olami**. If you missed the live prayer or would like to relive it, it can be viewed [here](#).

You can also find the special Prayer for Peace which was written for Ukraine by **Masorti Israel** and the **Rabbinical Assembly in Israel** in: [English](#), [French](#), [Hebrew](#) and [Spanish](#).

Amidst The Clouds: Addressing The Crisis In Ukraine

Our partners at **The Schechter Institutes** have created a source sheet which we hope will be useful in your communities as you discuss current world events and ways in which you might support Ukraine including its

Jewish communities. Please be in touch with us if you would like these materials translated for your community. The source sheet can be found [here](#).

**We again thank all of our supporters for
the tremendous outpouring of *chesed*.
The war in Ukraine is still ongoing, and our
communities still need your help.**

Click [here](#) to donate via **Masorti Olami**. To donate to
Masorti Olami from the **UK**, click [here](#).

Or via our partners at **The Schechter Institutes, Inc.** [here](#).



Our Ukrainian refugees explore Oradea in Romania, where they were kindly welcomed by the local Jewish community

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